

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
1176<sup>th</sup> US ARMY TRANSPORTATION TERMINAL BRIGADE  
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MEMORANDUM FOR Members of 1176<sup>th</sup> TTB and Subordinate Units

SUBJECT: COMMAND PHILOSOPHY

A. INTRODUCTION

I am extremely proud and very privileged to serve as your commander. I look forward to working with each of you and for all of us growing both professionally and personally in the next three years.

B. COMMAND GOAL—READINESS TO PERFORM OUR WARTIME MISSION

Readiness has many components—individual skills, collective skills, technical competency, leadership, unit strength, DMOSQ, IDT participation rate—to name but a few. Our actions must always be directed toward our mission; we must be trained so we will be ready to step up as soon as the Army calls us. We need trained and fit soldiers who are continually updating their skills. While working, training, and planning, keep in mind the following three very important considerations.

First, we must be constantly vigilant with regard to safety. A careless mistake could cost a life or a limb or a lifetime of guilt thinking, “If only I had . . .” Let’s be safe at all times and ensure that those around us are safe. Fifty-five percent of the Army casualties from World War II through Desert Storm/Desert Shield were caused by accidents, not hostile fire!

Second, do it legally. No one wants his or her career ruined or, worse yet, to spend time in jail because you chose the “expedient” method over the legal method. It’s better to do it by the book and sleep well at night knowing you did the right thing. By doing so you protect yourself, your fellow soldiers, and the Army.

Finally, enjoy your work. If you don’t like coming to drill, if you can’t bring yourself to do what needs to be done between drills . . . then either the command climate is lacking—and your leaders need to take action to improve it—or you’re in the wrong job at the wrong time—and you need to assess your personal goals and determine what changes need to be made. I charge each of you to care as much that your soldiers enjoy serving their country as members of the 1176<sup>th</sup> TTB as you care about the objective, measurable items upon which you may be judged.

C. SPECIFICS

Not in any particular order, the following are items I have learned from experience are important to me. As such, I work from these ideas and I expect each of you to incorporate them in your dealings with your entire chain of command and me.

**1. Speak up when you have an opinion about something.** I always welcome input and ideas before a decision is made. If you don’t share your thoughts up front, don’t complain later that you

don't like what's happening. There's such a thing as the "good idea cut-off point." Once a decision is made, I look for full support, even if it wasn't the decision you lobbied for.

**2. Use your own best judgment when making decisions.** The Army has confidence in you and so do I! I don't expect any of you to make decisions by trying to figure out exactly what I would do in a given situation so that you can do the same. I will support you in the decisions you make, so long as they are within your authority and they aren't contrary to orders; a product of fraud, waste, or abuse; or reckless. You can count on my support even if I would have made a different decision.

**3. Take responsibility for your actions.** It's okay to make mistakes. But don't make excuses when you make mistakes. Take responsibility, learn from your mistakes, and move on. Accept no less from your subordinates.

**4. I highly value dependability, loyalty, team effort, and a united front.** Our higher headquarters will hear us with one voice. That is, no matter who is representing us, the message will be the same—whatever we have decided internally. You will have an opportunity to make your voice heard within the brigade. Once we move forward with a plan of action, everyone must be on board to make it work.

**5. Lead by example.** Mentor the soldiers in your sphere of influence. Conduct face-to-face interviews with each soldier whose OER you write and do quarterly counseling for each soldier whose NCOER you write. DON'T wait until the end of a rating period to "do the paperwork." Consider the support form and the counseling requirements as a means to help you mentor, to lead, and to make sure you and your subordinates are working toward the same goals.

**6. Suspenses must be met.** Exceptions need to be coordinated in advance, absent an emergency. Suspenses are not important because someone arbitrarily decided that report X is due on Y date; they are important because others are depending on you to do your part so they can do their part of the mission. Meeting or not meeting suspenses are indicators of whether someone is or is not planning ahead. I consider planning ahead an essential part of leadership.

**7. I have an open door policy.** I ask, though, that you first give your chain of command an opportunity to address your concern or solve your problem. If you have, or if, under the circumstances, it isn't appropriate, to use your chain of command, then bring your issue to me. Unless you ask (and it's okay to ask) not to have him present, the SGM will be part of every "open door" session. I believe it is appropriate to seek mentoring and it is the duty of Army leaders to mentor those junior to them. So, I will be proactive in looking for opportunities to help in your professional development and I am open to being solicited for this purpose.

**8. Be positive.** Be enthusiastic. Be creative. Pay attention to details. Don't rely on "we've always done it that way." Put forth the effort to get it right the first time—don't make only a half-hearted attempt, figuring that if someone doesn't like it, you'll do it right the second time.

**9. Consider the following five levels of authority.** (1) Research the problem. That means look into it, give me the facts, and I'll decide what to do. (2) Recommend a solution. That means look into it, come to me with your recommendation, and we'll decide. (3) Run it by me. That means, look into it, let me know what you intend to do, then go ahead, unless I tell you not to. (4) Touch base. That means look into it, take action, let me know what you did. (5) Take control. That means, look into it, take action, no further contact is needed—you have the authority and the responsibility for whatever it is. My mode is to give someone a mission or assignment, provide the parameters and the timeline or suspense, suggest resources, and then leave you alone to do your job. Always know on which level of authority you and your subordinates are operating.

**10. When you make a suggestion or recommendation,** be ready to support it with reasoned analysis. When you criticize, make sure to criticize someone's idea, not someone. Don't do

nothing while awaiting further guidance—see number 2. above. Avoid upward delegation. Give me bad news yourself—I'd rather hear it from you than from my boss.

**11. Regarding OERs and NCOERs.** They should be done on time, they should be well-written, they should include details of a person's performance rather than all flowery language, the ratee should be given the benefit of the doubt when there is some doubt, they should be positive for a soldier who has supported you even if the soldier isn't as talented as you might wish, they should reflect if a soldier has not been loyal or supportive or dependable, they shouldn't contain any surprises for the ratee—that is, anything negative should already have been brought up in one or more counseling sessions. I recommend these guidelines to each of you who rates someone.

**12. The training schedule is our agenda for the weekend.** Every soldier should use it to know where to be, what to do, what resources to do it with. I should be able to visit any section and use the training schedule to find where everyone is and what they are doing. A well-run organization is one in which soldiers are going about their business in an orderly fashion, according to the training schedule. An organization is not well run when activities don't start on time, people don't know who is doing what, new soldiers are not welcomed and sponsored properly, the same person is scheduled to be in two or more places at once, soldiers are unoccupied, and people are scrambling at the last minute making preparations that should have been done weeks in advance. Have a sense of urgency BEFORE drill weekend, not during the weekend. Think of drill as the "play." The rehearsals and set building occur prior to the big event.

**13. The job of the brigade headquarters is to support the soldiers.** Our actions should be guided by asking ourselves whether a given action helps or hinders the soldiers in our units. We have to find a reasonable balance between the requirements to train soldiers in soldier skills and in mission skills. There will always be competing demands. Use your best judgment.

**14. Our families are of utmost importance.** Each of us must continually make choices about how we spend our time—there will always be competing demands from our families and our soldiers. After years of struggling with the competing demands, I have developed the philosophy that it's okay for my family to be inconvenienced, but not for them to sacrifice, for my Reserve responsibilities. (If we're mobilized, then we all sacrifice, but I'm talking about the day-to-day, week-to-week, and month-to-month stuff.) Now my challenge is to figure out where the line between inconvenience and sacrifice is! You must each address the competing demands in your own life. At times when I thought I couldn't juggle my family, my civilian job, and the Army, there was a mentor available to help me put it all in perspective. I urge each of you not to struggle with this problem alone—seek out others for help. Remember that the Army is a team sport!

**15. No one is indispensable.** A mark of a good leader is that his or her subordinates can carry out the mission in the absence of the leader. Don't "lose leave," don't miss that special family event because of a meeting, don't think your deputy or your assistant can't represent you when you need to be elsewhere. There are some things you must do yourself; delegate some of the others—you'll be sharing the workload and training those who will follow you.

#### D. CONCLUSION

I will hold each of you accountable for your part in pursuing our common mission to be ready to serve anywhere and anytime our country need us. I expect nothing but the highest standards of professionalism and the highest ethical standards from every member of the 1176<sup>th</sup> TTB. Each of you must have done something right to be in the position you're in. Try to figure out what it is and then keep doing it!

M. ALISON JAMESON  
LTC, TC, USAR  
Commanding